

## EVALUATING THE ROLE OF OM CHANTING IN REDUCING STRESS THROUGH ANULOM-VILOM PRANAYAMA FOR A PERIOD OF ONE MONTH IN HEALTHY ADULTS OF AGE 20 TO 35 YEARS USING HAM-A SCALE (HAMILTON ANXIETY RATING SCALE): A PILOT RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Word '**Tension**' is so easily used in common communication not only by adults but also by children nowadays, showing its impact on subconscious mind. The most homologous term to tension is 'Stress'. Scientists and motivational speaker says stress is good in order to achieve goals but persistent stress is evil. As per WHO, 359 million people worldwide suffering from Anxiety in 2021. Ancient yogic practises show variety of solutions over this in the form of Yoga, Pranayama, Chanting, Meditation etc. The effects of pranayama are known, but a comparison between Anulom-Vilom and Om chanting is not yet documented. Thus this study aims to evaluate the effect of Om chanting with Anulom-Vilom pranayama verses Anulom-Vilom alone on stress levels in healthy adults ranging in between 20 to 35 years of age with **HAM-A** scale. 10 healthy adults were randomly taken and divided into 2 groups (5 individuals in each group) - Group A and Group B. Group A performed Anulom -Vilom pranayama daily for 10 minutes up to 1 month. Group B performed Anulom-Vilom pranayama (10 minutes) with Om chanting

(5 minutes) daily up to 1 month. Stress scores are measured before and after intervention by using HAM-A scale. Group B showed greater decrease in HAM-A scores relative to group A indicating Om chanting with Anulom-Vilom pranayama is more effective in decreasing stress than just Anulom-Vilom pranayama.

**KEYWORDS:** Meditation, stress, yoga, Ayurveda, Spiritual, anxiety, mental health, Om chanting, Pranayama.

## INTRODUCTION

Human being consist of Soul and physical body. The effect of mind on body is mentioned not only in Spiritual contexts but also in Ayurveda and Modern science. Persistent stress has become part of common man's everyday life leading to mental and physical illnesses. In 2021, 359 million individuals worldwide suffered from anxiety disorders, making them the most prevalent mental illnesses. The covid-19 pandemic accelerated anxiety and depression by 25% in first year. Anxiety problems impact more women than men.<sup>[1]</sup> Stress is not gender, age, education or earning biased, it can destroy anybody anytime. The body uses stress as a coping mechanism for demands brought on by both positive and negative experiences. Through a complex repertoire of behavioural and physiological adaptive responses, the body responds to this need by releasing chemicals into the blood. Experiences of stress frequently result in a number of chronic illnesses, including coronary heart disease and hypertension.<sup>[2]</sup>

Stress is characterized as a condition of anxiety or tension brought on by a challenging circumstance. Humans naturally react to stress, which makes us confront obstacles and dangers in our life. Stress affects everyone to varying degrees. Our general well-being, however, is significantly impacted by how we handle stress.<sup>[3]</sup> In order to solve this, it is mandatory to have look on roots. Soul is the one who has intent, motive, interest, purpose, goal and such different types of energy expressions.<sup>[4]</sup> Old saying 'As I do, so I will get.' Here the word 'I' indicating 'Soul' not a body.<sup>[5,6]</sup> When consciousness shifts from soul to physical body, ego and laziness comes into action which further leads to stress because stress doesn't come from work rather it comes from not doing consistent work. As per various Upanishads, specially Mandukya, Mundaka and Katha 'Om' meaning 'I am a Soul(Ataman)'. Soul consist of mind (Thinking power), Intellect (Decision making power) and Sanskars (habits).<sup>[7]</sup> It means Soul suffering from persistent stress is directly affecting health. In Indian philosophy yoga, Pranayama and meditation is practiced for mental and physical relaxation. "Tataḥ Pratyak-Cetanādhigamo'py-Antarāyābhāvaś-ca" meaning Thence (from this practice),

comes the realization of the individual Self, and the removal of obstacles.<sup>[8]</sup> Lots of studies shows positive effect of alternate nostril breathing (Anulom - Vilom pranayama) on various physiological parameters including the autonomic nervous system, cognitive functioning indicating stress reduction.<sup>[9]</sup> But study on stress reduction by om chanting altogether with Anulom-vilom pranayama is rare, so this study aims at evaluating the role of Om Chanting in reducing stress through Anulom-Vilom Pranayama for a period of one month in healthy adults of age 20 to 35 years using HAM-A scale (Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale).

## METHODOLOGY

**STUDY SITE:** Ayurved Rugynalaya and Research Centre, Nigdi, Pune

**STUDY DURATION:** The study was conducted for 4 months.

**STUDY DESIGN:** Pilot RCT study

**PROPOSED SAMPLE SIZE:** The study was conducted on 10 healthy volunteers in ARSMH hospital.

**STUDY CRITERIA:** The study was carried out by considering the following inclusion and exclusion criteria.

## INCLUSION CRITERIA

Volunteer with any gender

Volunteer between age 20 to 35 years age

## EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Volunteers having history of DM, HTN, Thyroid etc.

Hyperactive individuals

Volunteer aged less than 20 years old

Volunteer aged more than 35 years old

## STUDY PROCEDURE

Randomly 10 healthy adults as per inclusion criteria were selected and informed about intervention. Then 10 healthy adults of age group 20 to 35 years were divided in 2 groups A and group B. By interviewing each volunteer from both groups on HAM-A scale (Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale) stress scores before intervention were registered. Group A containing 5 volunteers performed Anulom -Vilom pranayama daily for 10 minutes up to 1 month. Group B containing 5 volunteers performed Anulom-Vilom pranayama (10 minutes) with

Om chanting (5 minutes) daily up to 1 month. By using HAM-A scale, stress scores were registered after the intervention for time duration of 1 month.

## RESULTS

The stress scores are as follows-

Participant No.	Group A (Pranayama only)	Participant No.	Group B (Pranayama + Om Chanting)
1	Pre: 17, Post: 12	6	Pre: 18, Post: 9
2	Pre: 15, Post: 10	7	Pre: 16, Post: 7
3	Pre: 18, Post: 13	8	Pre: 17, Post: 8
4	Pre: 19, Post: 11	9	Pre: 19, Post: 10
5	Pre: 16, Post: 12	10	Pre: 18, Post: 9

After applying statistics, data shows

Group	Intervention	n	Pre (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Post (Mean $\pm$ SD)	t-value	p-value
A	Anulom-Vilom only	5	17.0 $\pm$ 1.58	11.6 $\pm$ 1.14	7.96	<b>0.0013</b>
B	Anulom-Vilom + Om chanting	5	17.6 $\pm$ 1.14	8.6 $\pm$ 1.14	$\infty$ (very large)	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>

### ▪ Within group results

From above table it clearly shows that both groups, group A and group B indicate significant reduction in stress scores after 1 month of practise. As  $p < 0.05$  in both groups (Anulom-Vilom pranayama with Om chanting and Anulom-Vilom pranayama alone), providing good results in stress reduction in both groups.

Test	Group A mean reduction	Group B mean reduction	t-value	p-value
Independent t-test	5.4	9.0	-5.31	<b>0.0007</b>

### ▪ Between group comparison

Group B (Anulom-Vilom pranayama and Om chanting) showed significantly greater reduction in stress levels than Group A (Anulom-Vilom pranayama alone) as p-value is 0.0007 indicates highly significant difference.

## DISCUSSION

The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) was used in this study to assess the effectiveness of Om chanting in reducing stress in healthy adults aged 20 to 35 years. After a month of practice, both intervention groups showed a statistically significant decrease in

anxiety scores, suggesting that Anulom-Vilom pranayama by itself has a positive impact on mental calmness and anxiety reduction.

However, HAM-A scores decreased noticeably more when Om chanting was added to Anulom-Vilom practice than when pranayama was used alone. This implies that combining the two methods will have a synergistic impact. Om chanting creates rhythmic vibrations that trigger the parasympathetic nervous system and vagus nerve, which lowers sympathetic arousal and induces a relaxing response. According to earlier research, chanting Om improves emotional stability, increases alpha wave activity in the brain, and lowers physiological indicators of stress like heart rate and cortisol levels.

Conversely, Anulom-Vilom pranayama improves autonomic balance, oxygenation, and mental attention by balancing the flow of prana through alternate nostril breathing. By combining breath control with sound resonance, the rhythmic breathing and Om's resonant sound vibration probably amplify the benefits of both techniques, improving general relaxation and the meditative response.

The results of this study are consistent with earlier studies on yoga therapies for anxiety management, which show that consistent pranayama and meditation practices significantly enhance mood, cognitive function, and perceived stress. The findings support the potential of straightforward, non-pharmacological therapies to enhance young adults' psychological wellbeing.

The study's short duration (1 month) and small sample size (10 individuals) are among its limitations. The evidence base might be strengthened by a bigger cohort with longer follow-up and the inclusion of physiological measures (such as salivary cortisol and heart rate variability).

## CONCLUSION

The current study finds that in healthy young people, Anulom-Vilom pranayama and Anulom-Vilom pranayama combined with Om chanting significantly lower anxiety levels as assessed by the HAM-A scale. Nonetheless, a larger and more statistically significant decrease in stress scores was observed in the group that practiced Om chanting in addition to pranayama.

This study shows that regular practise of Anulom-Vilom pranayama reduces stress surely but if it is accompanied with Om chanting (meditation) on daily basis will speed up mental relaxation even more than pranayama alone, which is useful, easy and accessible way leading to significant reduction in stress. Regular use of this combination may be advised to preserve emotional stability and psychological equilibrium.

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